

Samuel Loring and daughter Nancy S. (Loring) Parks

BY LAMONT "MONTY" HEALY
SPECIAL TO THE CLIPPER

When Thomas Loring (the third of that name) acquired the Lt. Holmes-Biddle Land Grant property in 1702, it marked the beginning of an over-300-year presence of the Loring family in Duxbury. Although Thomas later sold this property to the Honorable Gamaliel Bradford, he and his family would own most of the southern end of town, including the first parcel mentioned above. As the Loring family passed the property on, so too went much of their money. The first Duxbury Thomas had a brother Benjamin. It is from Benjamin that the more notable descendants were related. Benjamin's son Samuel (1747-1816) and grandson Samuel (1798-1847) retained both the property and the wealth. The third Samuel (1820-1887) and his brother, Harrison, helped establish the Loring name as leaders in the community. The third Samuel had a tack factory on Island Creek near where current resident Mr. Nudd keeps the Duxbury Dragon on display. There was a dam there, but the road was built over it. The pond on the north side of the street has had at least a couple of names: Mill Pond and Tack Factory Pond. Harrison was a shipbuilder who continued building ships into the Civil War era. He was involved in building some of the first ironclad ships for the U.S. government.

Samuel was the proud father of his only daughter, Nancy Sprague Loring. The Sprague name derived from her grandmother Nancy Sprague. Most of what we know about Nancy comes from the fullpage article covering her courtship, marriage and divorce as it appeared in the Boston Sunday Post on Feb. 7, 1904. Nancy had met John Henry Parks when they were both about 13 or 14 years old. He came from Missouri and attended the Duxbury Academy. It was "then and there" that Nancy "made up her mind that she would have only this handsome and fascinating little schoolmate for her playfellow." She was described in the article as the handsomest, the most talented and the cleverest girl in Plymouth. She was talked of as the coming belle of the county.

From the beginning, Nancy's father was not enamored of young John. He ordered John to keep away from Nancy, not in so many words, but by giving him the cold shoulder. When John was 18 and had just graduated from the academy, he went away from Duxbury. Nobody seemed to know where he went. Rumor was he was down South. Nancy "confided to her dearest chums. He will come back. Dad will have to let him come back." Before Nancy was 21, John Parks came back to Duxbury. On May 27, 1869, her 21st birthday, Nancy Loring married John Parks in the Loring mansion.

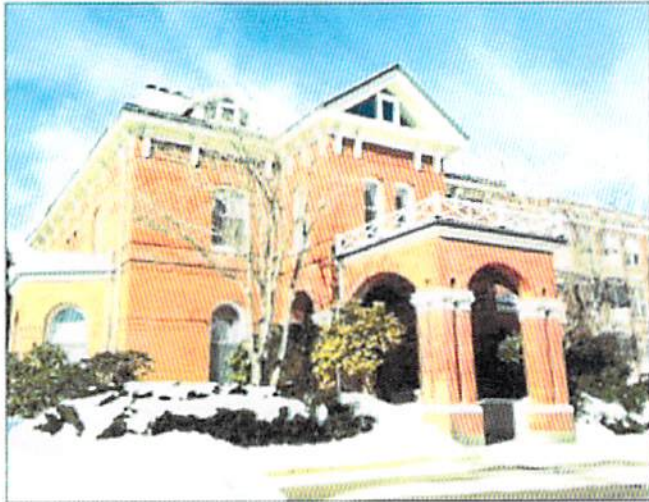
After the marriage Samuel took his son-in-law into the company as a clerk. The two men were as different as day and night. Samuel was the "hail fellow well met" type striking up a conversation with anybody he met. Everybody knew Sam Loring. His son-in-law was another sort: brilliant, fascinating, high-strung and somewhat aloof.

It was about this time in May of 1887 that Samuel took his own life while swimming at Fortress Monroe in Virginia by cutting his throat. There are some who speculate that he was murdered and thrown in the ocean. Suicide was the official cause of death, as Samuel's life seemed to be falling apart. His business was failing, and his only daughter's marriage was falling apart, you

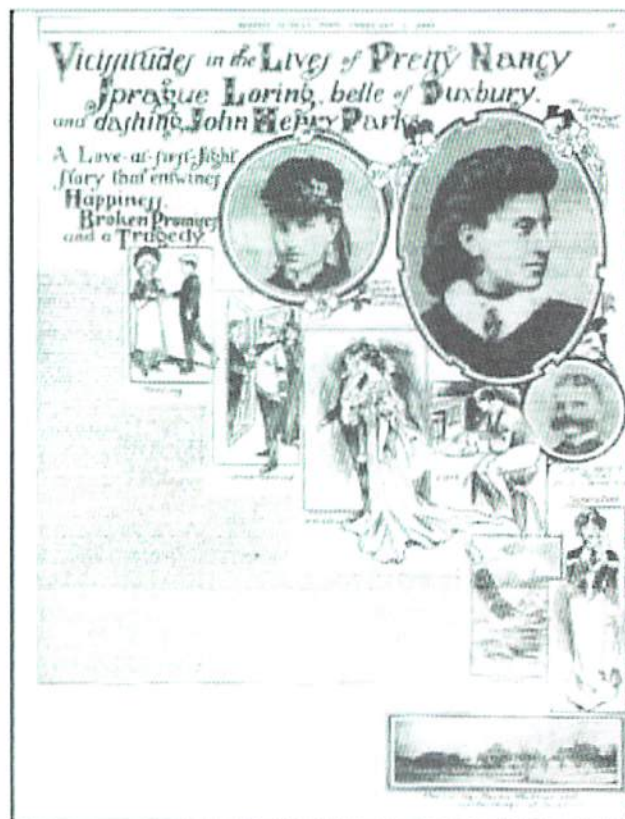
don't need much more to be suicidal. The events that followed were disastrous for all the Loring family members. The Atlas Tack Company went into receivership. The idyllic relationship of Nancy and John was disintegrating and later the divorce was covered publicly in the newspaper. The Lorings and Parks were a wealthy and successful family and as it often is with people of note, the newspapers jumped all over their adversity.

John had left for New York and basically abandoned Nancy and their four children. Nancy died in March of 1923, a resident of Kingston (the Loring homestead stretched into Kingston), in the hospital at Plymouth and is buried in the Loring lot in Mayflower Cemetery. Strangely the Miramar History shows the property being transferred from "John H. Parks, a New York businessman" to the Catholic Church, when in actuality, the deed is from Nancy S. Parks in 1911.

You now know where Loring and Parks Streets got their name.



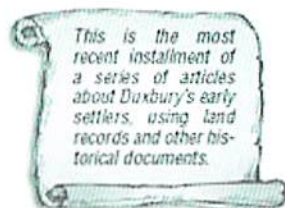
Samuel Loring's mansion, which later became Nancy L. Parks home. A photo of Miramar was inadvertently shown as Samuel Loring's mansion in a March 4, 2015 Clipper article. Built in 1883, the building is now part of the Bay Farm Condominium.



Boston Sunday Post article printed on Feb. 7, 1904 about Nancy Loring Parks, her marriage, divorce and her father's suicide.



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This is the most recent installment of a series of articles about Duxbury's early settlers, using land records and other historical documents.